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Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services

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Organizational matters

Report of the first regular session 2017 (30 January to 3 February 2017, New York)

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I. Organizational matters

1. The first regular session 2017 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 30 January to 3 February 2017. The President of the Board welcomed all delegations and thanked them for their trust in his leadership and their commitment to the work of the Board.

2. In accordance with rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board, the Board elected the following members of the Bureau for 2017:

President:	H.E. Mr. Ib Petersen (Denmark)
Vice-President:	H.E. Mr. Omar Annakou (Libya)
Vice-President:	Mr. Talal Aljamali (Yemen)
Vice-President:	H.E. Ms. Laura Elena Flores Herrera (Panama)
Vice-President:	Ms. Carolina Popovici (Republic of Moldova)

3. The Executive Board adopted the agenda and workplan for its first regular session 2017 (DP/2017/L.1), and approved the report of the second regular session 2016 (DP/2017/1). The Board adopted the annual workplan for 2017 (DP/2017/CRP.1) and approved the tentative workplan for the annual session 2017.

4. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2016 appeared in document DP/2017/2, which was available on the UNDP website.

5. The Executive Board agreed to the following schedule for future sessions of the Executive Board in 2017:

Annual session 2017:	30 May to 9 June 2017
Second regular session 2017:	5 to 11 September 2017

UNDP segment

II. Statement by the Administrator and country programmes and related matters

6. In her opening remarks to the Executive Board (available on the UNDP website), the Administrator, UNDP, began by presenting a video on the UNDP role in recovery and rebuilding in Haiti. She commended the President of the Board and new Vice-Presidents on their election, and paid tribute to the outgoing President and Vice-Presidents. The Administrator noted that this was a very important year for UNDP, as it would be working with the Board to develop a new strategic plan to guide its work for the years 2018-2021. She stated that she had advised the Secretary-General of her intention to leave UNDP at the end of her second term in April. She thanked the Board for its support throughout her tenure.

7. Turning to current work, the Administrator began by describing UNDP contributions and responses to the outcomes of major development processes over 2016, including the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the New Urban Agenda, the Climate Change Conference in Marrakech (COP 22) and the Convention on Biodiversity Conference of Parties (COP 13). She noted that UNDP is the largest implementer of climate change initiatives in the United Nations development system, with a grant portfolio of over 2.8 billion across 140 countries, and leveraging another 5.65 billion in co-financing. UNDP also has the largest biodiversity and ecosystems portfolio in the United Nations development system, with around 400 projects across 120 countries worth 1.6 billion in grants, with a further 5.1 raised through co-financing.

8. On the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the 2017-2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (the QCPR resolution), the Administrator noted that Member States want the United Nations development system to deliver coherent and integrated support to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda). She also stressed that the overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda is to leave no one behind, and that in pursuit of that, the UN system would need to work across the Charter and overcome silos. To that end, she noted that the capacity for joined-up analysis and planning was being strengthened, and so was the use of joint programming and multi-year joint funding, and of joint monitoring and evaluation. The transparency and frequency of common results reporting was also being enhanced. She further stressed that, as manager of the Resident Coordinator system, it was appropriate that UNDP pays the bulk of Resident Coordinator system expenses, noting, however, that getting support for a minor part of the cost by all parts of the system had proven problematic. She expressed the hope that an independent review would address this issue. On financing, the Administrator noted that the UNDG is actively exploring diverse financing options for 2030 Agenda implementation and shared that UNDG was in the final stages of setting up a UNDG Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda, which would facilitate providing integrated policy support to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level.

9. The Administrator stated that steady progress was being made on the new UNDP strategic plan 2018-2021. She affirmed that the vision of the new plan would build on the current one of helping countries to achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion. However, she noted the emergence of certain global trends likely to shape the new strategic plan, including (a) the need to respond to protracted crises, violent extremism, forced displacement, and major migrant movements; (b) the deepening effects of climate change and the global commitments to address these, which call for supporting accelerated adaptation and new models of inclusive and low-carbon growth; (c) fast urbanization, particularly in developing countries, and its associated challenges and opportunities; and (d) rising or high inequality within many countries and the ramifications for the economy, governance, human development, and social cohesion. She pledged that UNDP would avail itself of the expanded range of development actors and funding arrangements currently available, including a greater role for South-South cooperation as a complement to Official Development Assistance.

10. The Administrator reported that UNDP had led "MAPS missions" to nine countries last year, in line with the UNDG-agreed Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support approach to country support for implementing the 2030 Agenda. She stated that a further 40 MAPS missions were planned for this year. She described other areas of UNDP contribution to progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to UNDP management of the Action Campaign on behalf of the United Nations development system. These included developing specific global indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals, supporting countries to assess and improve their national data capacities for achieving them, and offering technical assistance to countries undertaking voluntary national reviews at the High Level Political Forum in July this year.

11. Turning to work in crisis settings, the Administrator briefed the EB on UNDP efforts in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Nigeria, and Gambia.

12. The Administrator then reported on various assessments of UNDP programmes and operations. She noted that the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment led by the Office of Audit and Investigation and the Independent Evaluation Office had observed improvement in the quality of country programme documents. Additionally, with the most recent audit for the year ending December 2015, UNDP had earned 11 years of clean audit reports from the United Nations Board of Auditors. The Administrator also noted the overall positive evaluation of its pilot activities under the Direct Budget Support and Pooled Fund policy, of which UNDP would be requesting an extension of validity, given the importance of sector budget support and pooled funds to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

13. The Administrator expressed appreciation for partner contributions to regular resources. In this regard, she especially acknowledged those Member States that had increased contributions to regular resources, joined or re-joined those making contributions to regular resources, and committed to multi-year funding of regular resources. She also thanked contributors to the new UNDP Funding Windows. Describing UNDP efforts to diversify its resource base, she stated that overall funding flows to UNDP from international financial institutions increased by 44 per cent last year. She also made note of a new major gifts programme, which had increased UNDP visibility among new prospective partners, and the launch of the Digital Good platform for online giving, supported by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Finally, she drew attention to the first direct private sector contribution to regular resources, from the Japan Innovation Network.

14. The President of the Executive Board, in paying tribute to the Administrator in her final appearance before the Board, proposed the adoption of a resolution in appreciation of the Administrator and of her tenure. Delegations paid tribute to the Administrator and commended her leadership of UNDP.

15. Delegations welcomed the overview of UNDP responses to the outcomes of recent development processes. In particular, they commended UNDP adherence to the letter and spirit of the QCPR resolution. They stressed that the QCPR resolution provides a long-term strategic guide to harmonize the work of the United Nations development system, by calling on all funds and programmes to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in an integrated and coordinated way. They underscored the importance of UNDP support to national development efforts and to developing national capacities to attain development objectives. Referring to the 2030 Agenda, delegations highlighted the imperative of inclusiveness and the overarching mandate to 'leave no one behind'. They urged UNDP to remain flexible and responsive to a range of country needs and contexts, including those of least developed countries, small-island developing states and middle-income countries. Delegations also affirmed the need to strengthen the Resident Coordinator system, and encouraged UNDP to lead by example to foster a collegial, collaborative dynamic among members of the United Nations development system in order to strengthen cooperation and coordination.

16. Noting that the UNDP strategic plan 2018-2021 would be the first adopted within the framework of the 2030 Agenda, delegations expressed enthusiasm for the process of developing the new plan. They urged UNDP to work with delegations in a transparent and inclusive manner to develop a plan that reflects the interests and priorities of Member States, especially in the context of supporting Member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Delegations described the global setting in which the next strategic plan would need to prove effective, particularly the repercussions of protracted security and humanitarian crises and of climate change. They exhorted UNDP to deepen its support to countries in strengthening resilience and promoting inclusive development, with a focus on poverty eradication and empowerment of the poorest and most vulnerable, including the disabled. Some delegations encouraged UNDP to find new ways of working to improve efficiency and effectiveness, deliver results and maximize impact in the countries it serves, including by coordinating the development of its strategic plan with that of the strategic plans of other funds and programmes.

17. A number of delegations focused on the preparation and submission of the different strategic plans for the funds, programmes and specialized agencies. They asked to be informed of the work and outcome of the United Nations joint working group, established to ensure a coordinated approach in the process, structure and complementarity of the different organizations' strategic plans, and requested that the organizations review and align their deadlines – with strategic options and an outline distributed to delegations at least one week prior to the scheduled workshop in March 2017. Each plan, they stressed, should include a 'chapeau' section explaining the UNDG-recommended approach and each organization's specific contribution. On a related note, some noted that the Board would function better if it

received documentation well in advance of Board sessions, as this would facilitate reflection and more constructive responses.

18. Delegations acknowledged improvement in the areas of operational transparency and results reporting. At the same time, delegations underlined the importance of further improving effectiveness, efficiency, and flexibility in responding quickly to situations at the country level. Many delegations called for stronger coordination among UN Country Teams to better deliver as one. Some delegations requested that UNDP better synchronize its reform process with those of other funds and programmes, to allow Member States to more easily monitor progress across the United Nations development system.

19. Delegations expressed concern at the diminishing proportion of regular resources to other resources, noting that current development challenges underscored the vitality of the UNDP mandate and further emphasised the importance of predictable, stable, and adequate regular resources. Delegations commended efforts to expand the UNDP resource base, including through new funding arrangements with programme countries, new financing models, and an expanded partner base, including with international financial institutions and the private sector. Delegations also expressed support for UNDP efforts to promote South-South and triangular cooperation. They encouraged UNDP to build into the new strategic plan the adaptability to respond to new financial trends and a changing partner landscape.

20. In response, the Administrator thanked delegations for their statements, and in particular for their useful comments on the upcoming UNDP strategic plan for 2018-2021. She underscored the UNDP commitment to respond to the needs of least developed countries, small-island developing states and middle-income countries. She noted the development risks imposed by climate change and violent extremism, and pledged that poverty eradication would remain at the foundation of UNDP programming. The Administrator stated that UNDP was actively working with other funds and programmes to harmonize implementation of the QCPR resolution, including by participating in the development of a common framework. She also affirmed continued strong UNDP commitment to transparency. Finally, she thanked Member States for their commitment to a well-resourced UNDP, stating that predictable funding was essential to ensuring that UNDP could respond effectively to crises. The Administrator closed her response by again thanking delegations for their warm tributes to her leadership of the organization.

21. The Executive Board adopted decision 2017/1 on expression of appreciation to Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, 2009 – 2017.

Country programmes and related matters

22. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, introduced the item. The UNDP regional directors for Latin America and the Caribbean and for Africa elaborated on the draft country programme documents for Haiti, Botswana and Chad.

23. The Executive Board reviewed and approved, in accordance with decision 2014/7, the following country programmes: Haiti (DP/DCP/HTI/3) for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Botswana (DP/DCP/BWA/2) and Chad (DP/DCP/TCD/3) for Africa.

III. Evaluation

24. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP, introduced the item and presented the evaluation of the UNDP contribution to anti-corruption and addressing drivers of corruption (DP/2017/4). The Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP, presented the management response to the evaluation of the UNDP contribution to anti-corruption and addressing drivers of corruption (DP/2017/5).

25. Board members thanked the Independent Evaluation Office for its report on the UNDP contribution to anti-corruption and addressing drivers of corruption and management for its response. Noting that the 2030 Agenda underscores the importance of combating illicit financial flows, delegations commended UNDP for undertaking leadership in this regard by integrating anticorruption measures into its programming and policies. They urged UNDP to proceed with the development of a comprehensive anticorruption strategy, and to enhance its in-house capacity to deliver better results on anticorruption initiatives. Acknowledging a dearth of available resources at the country level for dedicated anticorruption initiatives, making it difficult to mainstream anticorruption across sectors, they encouraged UNDP to be proactive in unlocking new sources of funding and in seeking synergies with other development actors, such as the World Bank and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

26. Delegations exhorted UNDP to focus its efforts where there was strong political will and national ownership of the anticorruption agenda, rather than purely on the basis of representation. They asserted that anticorruption should be central to the UNDP strategic plan 2018-2021, on the basis of Sustainable Development Goal 16, and should be a focus of UNDP work in high-risk contexts such as fragile states. Delegations also called on UNDP to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment were adequately mainstreamed into its anticorruption work.

27. In response, the Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP, affirmed that UNDP would seek opportunities to engage in more joint programming. He asserted that, although UNDP garnered high visibility for its anticorruption efforts because of its global positioning, those efforts were constrained by reductions in regular resources.

28. The Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP, stated that many governments had demonstrated a willingness to combat corruption, and to work with the United Nations development system and with Member States in this regard. Noting that UNDP research indicated that open data and transparent processes were more effective than parliamentary monitoring groups and anticorruption commissions, he described UNDP work on e-governance and technological solutions, and pledged to more deeply integrate anticorruption work into broader institutional reform efforts. He provided several examples of anticorruption initiatives at the country level, citing efforts in Mexico to protect natural resources, in Panama to enhance transparency, and in Gabon to educate children on the ways in which corruption affects everyday life. Finally, he stated that approximately four per cent of UNDP regular resources were spent on anticorruption work, and noted that Member State contributions to peace-building also funded anticorruption initiatives.

29. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP, then presented the evaluation of disability-inclusive development at UNDP (DP/2017/6). The Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP, presented the management response to the evaluation of disability-inclusive development at UNDP (DP/2017/7).

30. Delegations commended UNDP contributions to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its achievements thus far in supporting disability-inclusive improvements to legal and policy frameworks. They noted that UNDP was well placed to advocate for the interests of people with disabilities, and urged UNDP to use its Resident Coordinator role to promote disability-inclusive programming and policies throughout the United Nations development system. They requested that the UNDP strategic plan, 2018-2021, include clear disability-inclusive targets, goals and initiatives, together with an action plan for driving the agenda in the light of the recommendations of the evaluation. They urged UNDP to prioritize disability-inclusiveness in its own facilities and staffing, as well as to strengthen data gathering and analysis on people with disabilities.

31. The Executive Board adopted decision 2017/2 on the evaluation of the UNDP contribution to anti-corruption and addressing drivers of corruption and management response; and the evaluation of disability-inclusive development at UNDP and management response.

IV. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

32. The Deputy Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, introduced the item and presented the evaluation of the pilot activities carried out under the direct budget support policy.

33. Board members welcomed the report on the evaluation. They recognized direct budget support as among the flexible responses and tools available to UNDP in its support of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, delegations exhorted UNDP to ensure that the primary role of direct budget support was to support national capacity and policy development, and to use the sector budget support modality only in exceptional cases based on clearly expressed demand, with clearly delineated roles for UNDP.

34. In response, the Deputy Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, assured Board members that direct budget support would be used in exceptional cases only. He described the several tiers of risk mitigation and internal controls associated with direct budget support. Reiterating this position, the Directors of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP, both confirmed to delegations that UNDP used the modality only upon national demand to strengthen policy support, rather than to provide funds for service delivery.

35. The Executive Board adopted decision 2017/3 on the evaluation of the pilot activities carried out under the direct budget support policy.

UNFPA segment

V. Statement by the Executive Director and country programmes and related matters

36. In his statement to the Executive Board, the UNFPA Executive Director drew attention to the Fund's active engagement in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014 agenda, which UNFPA was pursuing in close collaboration with other United Nations development system organizations and in line with the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, laid out in General Assembly resolution 71/243. He stressed that gender equality and women's empowerment would remain the top priorities in the new UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021, as reaffirmed at a workshop organized for Board Members on the strategic plan in December 2016. The new strategic plan, he highlighted, was built in close collaboration with all stakeholders. The Fund was also proactively contributing to the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) strategic planning working group to collectively align and interconnect the United Nations development system organizations' strategic plans with the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and the quadrennial review.

37. The Executive Director affirmed that the UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021 would strongly position the Fund within the 2030 Agenda, and focus on delivering transformative results, informed by a robust evidence base and guided by the 'bull's eye', in response to global development and humanitarian situations. While much progress had been made, especially in boosting maternal health, the Fund continued to face challenges, notably funding constraints, an uncertain political environment, historic levels of displacement, exacerbated humanitarian needs, and pushback on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and gender

equality. To ensure UNFPA was able to achieve its mandate, he called on Board members to honour their funding commitments to the Fund and to step up funding to regular (core) resources, if possible, especially to offset the Fund's recent and ongoing austerity measures.

38. The Fund, the Executive Director noted, continued to explore ways to reduce costs and improve efficiency by cost mapping, freezing vacancies, streamlining processes and freeing up staff capacity and resources. Those efforts included tweaking the business model to address changes in global and local environments, and taking a differentiated approach more suitable to country needs. Similarly, UNFPA was adapting its financing and funding strategies in the new plan to meet evolving financial constraints and opportunities, while expanding the donor base and building further on South-South and triangular cooperation opportunities. That included concerted efforts to mobilize alternative resources, hand in hand with better organizational effectiveness, efficiency and delivery.

39. On the humanitarian front, an area where Board members urged UNFPA to play an ever growing role, the Executive Director drew attention to the Fund's sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights services, including gender-based violence, in crisis and conflict countries, from Afghanistan to Mali and from the Central African Republic to the Syrian Arab Republic. Those efforts had brought enormous relief to millions of women, girls, adolescents and youth, fostering a smoother transition from crisis to development.

40. Turning to data, the Executive Director highlighted that UNFPA, as one of many United Nations development system organizations engaged in that field, had a unique role in supporting data systems in the area of population data and sexual and reproductive health data, often in partnership with a range of data networks, and building on 40 years of support to national censuses. Similarly, the Fund had a special role to play in helping countries capitalize on the demographic dividend through advocacy, engagement and family planning, as exemplified at the 28th African Union Summit in Addis Ababa in January 2017. The Fund's work in that area was vital to realizing the transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda, especially its impact on adolescent girls, by providing safe spaces, mentoring, literacy and life skills classes, comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services. The Executive Director appealed to Board members to ensure the Fund's crucial role in helping girls everywhere to go and stay in school; to be free from child marriage, teenage pregnancy and violence; to know and exercise their rights; and to realize their full potential and help to make a better world.

41. Board members highlighted the importance of 2017 for UNFPA as it finalized its new strategic plan, 2018-2021, which, they stressed, should reinforce its mandate under ICPD and Agenda 2030. They expressed continued strong support for UNFPA work in crisis and non-crisis countries. They welcomed the Fund's focus on family planning, the demographic dividend, rapid humanitarian response and resilience building, and data for development work, as per ICPD principles, the 2030 Agenda and the 2016 quadrennial review. The Fund's mandate, they emphasized, was crucial to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, while the quadrennial review provided an excellent framework for United Nations development system coherence, a necessary component for the success of the UNFPA mandate.

42. Delegations strongly supported the Fund's human rights-based approach and focus on the most vulnerable, especially adolescent girls and youth. Despite progress in maternal health and notable reductions in maternal mortality, there was a call for the Fund to step up its efforts in that area. Other delegations called on UNFPA to continue to pursue efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation/cutting. Still others stated that slow movement of United Nations reform efforts would negatively affect 2030 Agenda implementation and the Fund's ability to deliver results, especially in protracted conflict and crisis settings. They encouraged UNFPA and the United Nations development system to pursue the coherence agenda laid out and reiterated in the quadrennial review, and looked forward to discussing how the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial review could further advance that agenda. A number of

delegations noted that the new strategic plan, 2018-2021 should reflect both quadrennial review principles on coherence and the related recommendations of the Secretary-General. They also underscored the importance, both for the Fund and United Nations development system organizations overall, of accountability, transparency, value for money, common services, efficiency and stronger monitoring and evaluation. They commended UNFPA for its impressive humanitarian response and its invaluable work bridging the humanitarian-development divide, and they encouraged the Fund to follow the agreements reached at the World Humanitarian Summit in line with the 'Grand Bargain'.

43. The large majority of delegations expressed concern with the continued trend of declining core resources, which, they noted, had to be stable and predictable in order for UNFPA to fulfil its mandate. Similarly, there was concern over reductions at the regional level owing to the difficult financial situation. Across the Board, delegations encouraged each other to step up their contributions, stressing that a strong base of regular resources remained the priority. At the same time, they recommend that the Fund make every effort to explore broader funding sources and new partnerships, including with the private sector and through domestic financing. The continued decline in core funding, delegations noted, meant that inter-agency coherence was more important than ever. Delegations commended UNFPA for its inter-agency engagement, promotion of its comparative advantages and adaptability. In addition, two delegations announced they were sponsoring a new global fund-raising initiative called 'She Decides', which included a platform that allowed for private-sector contributions.

44. Member States welcomed the Fund's work in data for development. They viewed data analysis and sharing, and the disaggregation of data, as key ways to build partnerships and political will and to allow UNFPA to target and assist the most vulnerable, 'leaving no one behind'. The Fund's data work on demographic trends and population issues, including their effect on climate change and human rights, were likewise commended as crucial. Delegations considered the Fund's data analysis work vital for UNFPA to tailor its assistance to different country conditions and settings. Data and evidence, they noted, should inform its new strategic plan, 2018-2021, its approach to resource mobilization, and its work to forge targeted results and ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness. They stressed the importance of integrating monitoring and evaluation into all aspects of the plan, so that they fed back into planning and programming.

45. Several delegations drew attention to the benefits and drawbacks of multi-country offices and programmes. They noted that countries in regions with UNFPA multi-country offices (Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean), many of which were middle-income countries and small-island developing States, were particularly susceptible to external shocks. Those regions and countries, they said, required a differentiated approach adapted to their special needs. Delegations were concerned that declining core funding would set back hard-won development gains in the regions and force the Fund to reduce staffing and services. Some expressed concern that the proposed tweaking of the business model might negatively affect middle-income countries and small-island developing States, an issue they hoped the strategic plan, 2018-2021, would address. Others drew attention to the importance of UNFPA work in the least developed countries and in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, especially in building local capacity for sexual and reproductive health services.

46. A number of delegations focused on the preparation and submission of the different strategic plans for the funds, programmes and specialized agencies. They asked to be informed of the work and outcome of the United Nations joint working group, established to ensure a coordinated approach in the process, structure and complementarity of the different organizations' strategic plans, and requested that the organizations review and align their deadlines – with strategic options and an outline distributed to delegations at least one week prior to the scheduled workshop in March 2017. Each plan, they stressed, should include a 'chapeau' section explaining the UNDG-recommended approach and each organization's

specific contribution. On a related note, some noted that the Board would function better if it received documentation well in advance of Board sessions, as this would facilitate reflection and more constructive responses.

47. In response, the Executive Director thanked delegations for their strong support to the Fund's mandate, both politically and financially. He assured them that UNFPA would make sure to reflect their comments and recommendations in the new strategic plan, 2018-2021. UNFPA would continue to play an active role in the United Nations joint working group, he said, not only to align the strategic plans of the various organizations but also to ensure coordinated delivery at country level, to maximize resources and assistance to Governments in achieving the 2030 Agenda. He assured Board members that UNFPA would continue unwaveringly its work on adolescents and girls, particularly in humanitarian settings, buttressed by a strong gender focus and its human rights-based approach. He highlighted that the ICPD specified that the Fund's mandate and all aspects of its work, including the 'bull's eye', were unequivocally grounded in human rights, which also included gender equality and women's empowerment. He reassured the Board that humanitarian considerations would be mainstreamed into all elements of the strategic plan, 2018-2021, covering both conflict and climate issues, and focusing on especially vulnerable regions and countries, such as small island developing States. He stressed that the Fund's data work, including training in its collection and use, was key in those efforts, as it informed policy and helped to ensure the best results. Affirming that UNFPA would continue to lead on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as well as family planning, he noted that the new strategic plan, 2018-2021, was the first in a series of three strategic plans that would guide the Fund's work throughout the 2030 Agenda. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights and family planning would be a central focus in all three upcoming strategic plans, both in policy and in implementation, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized. UNFPA, he pointed out, was an active partner in the movement, launched at the 28th African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, to reinvigorate Family Planning 2020. He stressed the importance of family planning as a central element of the Fund's mandate, with positive repercussions in all other aspects of its work, including achievement of the demographic dividend, covering both youth and the aged. Noting that UNFPA was actively engaged in United Nations development system coordination and alignment with the quadrennial review, he emphasized that, in order to achieve its mandate, UNFPA needed the political support of the Board as well as strong financial backing, especially in funding its core resources. He called on the Board to guarantee that human rights remained indivisible – because one could not exist without the other. Data systems, he noted, were a crucial factor in that fight – to empower individuals, evaluate results and guide investments. UNFPA would continue to engage closely with Board members in all those areas.

Country programmes and related matters

48. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the item. The UNFPA regional directors for the Arab States, East and Southern Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean presented the country programmes for Botswana and Haiti, as well as the second one-year extension of the country programme for Somalia.

49. The Executive Board reviewed and approved, in accordance with its decision 2014/7, the country programmes documents for Botswana (DP/FPA/CPD/BWA/6) and Haiti (DP/FPA/CPD/HTI/6).

50. The Executive Board approved the second one-year extension of the country programme for Somalia (DP/FPA/2017/3).

VI. Evaluation

51. The Director, UNFPA Evaluation Office, presented the thematic evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth, 2008-2015 (DP/FPA/2017/CRP.1), followed by the management response presented by the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme).

52. Delegations, in a joint statement, welcomed the timely evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth, 2008-2015, as well as the management response, and commended the hard work of the Evaluation Office, the team of evaluators from the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute and the evaluation reference group, all of whom, they noted, had ensured the robustness of the evaluation. Underscoring the importance of assisting adolescents and youth, who often faced social and political barriers to realizing their full potential, the delegations stressed that UNFPA had to remain at the forefront in addressing the needs of adolescents and youth, especially with regard to sexual and reproductive health, given the Fund's distinct comparative advantage, as pointed out in the evaluation. They concurred with the evaluation recommendation that UNFPA should focus on its mandate and added value, so that it continued to lead on the broader agenda for adolescents and youth, especially within the 2030 Agenda framework. They commended the Fund for consistently incorporating human rights aspects, gender responses and culturally sensitive approaches into adolescents and youth programming at all levels. They encouraged UNFPA management to continue to build on its strong record of achievement in supporting adolescents and youth on the development of the new strategic plan, 2018-2021.

53. The delegations recognized the evaluation's recommendation for UNFPA to strengthen its strategic clarity and coordination of its support to adolescents and youth and to coordinate more closely with other United Nations development system organizations to prevent, resolve and respond to the needs of adolescents and youth. They stressed that all organizations should remain focused on shared goals and comparative advantages while engaging more actively with national and key health and protection system stakeholders. They also supported the greater integration of adolescent girl programming. Targeted adolescent girl programming, they noted, had to be a central element in the new strategic plan, 2018-2021. Stepping up efforts in that area required deepening gender-sensitive responsive tools and indicators, and engaging men and boys to advance gender equality. They further concurred with the evaluation's recommendation that the strategic plan had to target the most marginalized adolescents and youth through stronger analysis and use of data, and agreed that UNFPA should develop clear operational definitions of 'marginalized' and 'vulnerable' groups – a move, they stressed, that would help to better target that group in future planning and programming. Finally, they stressed that the Fund should pursue meaningful engagement with adolescents and youth at all levels of programming, and encouraged UNFPA to work closely with young people and other stakeholders through greater investments in local knowledge and capacity. Empowering women and girls to their full potential for leadership was key to that endeavour.

54. The delegations welcomed the management response, noting that it adequately addressed the concerns raised while outlining satisfactory next steps. Pointing to progress to date, delegations were pleased to note that UNFPA had already begun to address many of the evaluation's recommendations. They were pleased to see that management was receptive to the recommendation that UNFPA should continue to coordinate and deliver multisectoral, holistic support for adolescents and youth while ensuring the centrality of the needs of the adolescent girl.

55. In response, the Director, UNFPA Evaluation Office, welcomed the reflections on the evaluation and how the recommendations should be incorporated in the UNFPA strategic planning process. She thanked management for its thorough and comprehensive response to the evaluation, and urged both the Board and UNFPA management to follow up on the evaluation's recommendations in subsequent years.

56. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) stressed the importance of greater coordination and in maximizing United Nations organizations' comparative advantages, as well as the need for specific intergenerational indicators on adolescent girls that were gender sensitive and included men and boys. She agreed with the need to define terms such as 'marginalized' and 'vulnerable', and welcomed the Board's positive comments on the Fund's continued leadership role in the area of adolescents and youth.

57. The Executive Board adopted decision 2017/4 on the thematic evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth, 2008-2015.

58. The Executive Board Bureau decided to withdraw the draft decision on the thematic evaluation of UNFPA support to family planning, 2008-2013 (DP/FPA/2016/CRP.5). In that regard, two delegations, highlighting the importance of oversight and guidance based on independent evaluations, expressed regret that the Board was unable to reach consensus on the draft decision on the thematic evaluation, which had already been deferred from the second regular session 2016. They noted that the draft decision was a highly crafted compromise text that had undergone extensive consultations and received broad Board support. They trusted that UNFPA management had taken note of that support and would implement the evaluation's recommendations, keeping the Board informed of its follow-up in the elaboration of the next strategic plan, 2018-2021.

UNOPS segment

VII. Statement by the Executive Director

59. In her opening address to the Board (available on the UNOPS website), the Executive Director, UNOPS, welcomed the arrival of the new Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General. She stated that UNOPS would coordinate with their offices as it prepared its new strategic plan, which would be fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda. She described UNOPS as a distinctive self-financed UN entity, able to deploy personnel and resources with unparalleled speed to respond to crises. In this regard, she provided several examples of UNOPS contributions to peace and security. She spoke of UNOPS support to the High-level Standby Mediation Team of the Department of Political Affairs, which had made about 100 deployments in 2016, some within as few as 16 hours from the time of request. During the Ebola epidemic, UNOPS had mobilized a team of experts within 12 days with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. In Mali, UNOPS procured 18 million in equipment for the UN Mine Action Gateway within two weeks; in Nepal, it engaged and equipped 2,500 housing surveyors within 16 days of the earthquake. Noting that procurement accounted for half of UNOPS delivery, the Executive Director stated that although UNOPS in 2016 had been named a gold standard bearer by the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply, it sought to further improve collaboration, efficiency and sustainability in its procurement practices, as called for in the QCPR resolution.

60. Stating that around 4.5 trillion in infrastructure investments would be needed each year for the next 15 years in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the Executive Director described the UNOPS seed capital investment facility, designed to attract capital from companies, organizations and funds for impact investing. She described infrastructure projects in Sierra Leone and St. Lucia that could attract private investment. Turning to organizational improvements, she described measures to strengthen risk management and internal controls, including through a new governance, risk and compliance platform to improve internal decision-making.

61. Board members commended UNOPS for its modern, innovative approaches to sustainable procurement and project implementation and management, grounded in the principles of sustainable development as laid out in the Agenda 2030. They praised the UNOPS commitment

to rapid service, and to keeping costs low and services accessible to Member States across the range of country contexts, including least developed countries, small-island developing states, and fragile or conflict-affected states. Delegations encouraged UNOPS to develop its new strategic plan in an open and collaborative way, and to continue to strengthen risk management and internal controls. Some delegations expressed surprise at the low levels of reported fraud.

62. In response, the Executive Director, UNOPS, welcomed Board members' continued strong support for its work in fragile and conflict-affected states. She assured delegations of the robustness of UNOPS anti-fraud mechanisms.

Joint segment

VIII. Recommendations of the Board of Auditors

63. The Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, introduced the report of UNDP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for 2015 (DP/2017/11). The Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, introduced the report of the Executive Director: follow-up to the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for 2015: status of implementation of the recommendations (DP/FPA/2017/1). The Deputy Executive Director, UNOPS, introduced the report of UNOPS on the status of the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for 2015 (DP/OPS/2017/1).

64. Board members commended the unqualified audit opinions for UNDP, UNCDF, UNFPA and UNOPS, and welcomed the progress made overall by all four organizations in the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors.

UNDP

65. Delegations, while commending UNDP on an unqualified audit opinion, expressed concern that only half of the top priorities had been implemented. They noted that UNDP had reported 16 cases of fraud or possible fraud to the Board. They queried whether this was due to an increase in fraud or to improved capacity to report fraud. Delegations also suggested making audit reports management response more useful by more fully reflecting the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and describing in greater detail how UNDP intended to address them, especially with respect to recurring issues. They further recommended including a summary of oversight mechanisms showing how implementation would be monitored.

66. Delegations welcomed proposed actions to address lapses in procurement management, including the decision to move high-risk, high-volume procurement to regional hubs and global shared service centres. Nonetheless, they requested an update on how UNDP intended to address the underlying issues that had led to the lapses in the first place. Delegations also requested further information on plans and progress toward risk-based oversight of country offices.

67. In response, the Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, welcomed suggestions on how to make the audit report management response more useful. On the issue of fraud reporting, while it could not be confirmed whether the increase in fraud reporting reflected an increase in scrutiny or an increase in fraud, he reported that UNDP was now scrutinizing transactions more closely. In addition, he reported that UNDP had a broad anti-fraud strategy, as well as targeted improvements to business practices designed to bolster transparency. Finally, he acknowledged that there remained room for improvement in project management, in particular with respect to the closing of projects. He pledged that UNDP would make more active use of the revised evaluation policy to tighten feedback loops on substantive assessments of the effectiveness of its projects.

UNFPA

68. Delegations welcomed UNFPA progress in implementing Board of Auditors' recommendations since 2016. They were pleased with the unqualified audit opinion for UNFPA financial statements for 2015, and noted the Board of Auditors' positive comments on the overall financial situation. They were concerned, however, with the decline in core funding, and sought clarity on the Fund's actions to diversify sources of funding. Given UNFPA exposure to risks in complex operating environments, the delegations were pleased to see progress in the Fund's efforts to establish and roll out its enterprise risk management framework. They welcomed the Board of Auditors' recommendations on the need to develop a global risk mitigation strategy for all UNFPA operations, along with country-specific risk and response strategies. They were pleased with the Fund's ongoing efforts to manage risk at the local level, but encouraged further work, concurring with the recommendation that country offices should document risk assessment processes and set up comprehensive risk assessment plans, while building staff capacity. They encouraged UNFPA to engage with United Nations Development Group (UNDG) partners to maximize cooperation in that area.

69. The delegations supported the Board of Auditors' recommendation that the Fund continue to build the capacity of implementing partners in order to better assess results and carry out quality assurance to address weaknesses. They endorsed the recommendation on results-based management, noting it would improve UNFPA ability to measure and monitor indicators. They encouraged the Fund to work with country team members facing similar challenges.

70. Delegations fully supported the Board of Auditors' recommendation to document the process of determining support cost rates, especially in light of restricted resources. They welcomed the recommendation to strengthen procurement procedures and minimize risk, and encouraged the Fund to collaborate closely with United Nations development system organizations to improve common services in that area, which would help the Fund to maximize efficiency gains. They sought information on the new UNFPA shipment tracker system, and encouraged the Fund to strive to maximize value for money in all areas of operation. They asked UNFPA to clarify how declining core and increased earmarked contributions had affected its business model, and how risks were being mitigated. They also inquired how the Fund managed its short-term assets and exchange rate risks and fluctuations. Finally, they asked the Fund to elaborate on how the changing financial situation affected the status of implementation of Board of Auditors' recommendations.

71. In response, UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) stated that, in 2016, UNFPA had focused on the recurrent issues highlighted by the Board of Auditors, often also raised by donors and others. It was important for UNFPA to look at them holistically, following a tight process of identification, analysis and associated action plans. She noted that the Fund closely monitored discussions on core funding, through a thorough cost mapping, adjusting its operations to tally with the availability of core funds. Likewise, as part of austerity measures, UNFPA closely monitored travel, consultancies, training and other items in order to ensure that activities have value for money, are needs driven, and have a specific purpose and outcome. The business model, she noted, would be best discussed as part of the Fund's work to develop its new strategic plan, 2018-2021.

72. The Director, Division for Management Services, UNFPA, highlighted that the Fund was in the second year of its enterprise risk management cycle for 2015-2016. In the first stage, 138 business units were required to perform a full risk assessment, which was much improved from the first year, and had to include justifications for inherent and residual risks; in the event of high risk, an action plan had to be adjoined. In the second stage, set to begin in November 2017, UNFPA would undertake a review of those high risks through a risk treatment working group, which comprised mostly specialists who reviewed all critical areas, distinguishing between local and corporate. He noted that UNFPA business units honed in on 11 strategic risks as well as

fraud as first steps each year, as part of a wider strategy on fraud. He also stated that UNFPA was in the final stages of revising the new fraud policy, which was scheduled to be approved in the first quarter 2017. That approval would be followed by an extensive training package for UNFPA staff as well as implementing partners. On a related issue, highlighting that almost 30 per cent of UNFPA expenditures went through national execution, he noted the Fund had fully adopted the harmonized approach to cash transfers modality in 2016. UNFPA had been conducting annual financial management reviews of the majority of implementing partners' expenses by an independent audit firm; the Fund would continue to undertake those reviews in addition to spot checks under the harmonized approach to cash transfers modality. He noted that UNFPA had begun using an inventory shipment tracker as part of its enterprise resources management, and added that for currency management and other financial issues, the Fund continued to use UNDP services, on which the two organizations collaborated closely through regular meetings.

73. The Executive Board adopted decision 2017/5 on the reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for 2015.

IX. Follow-up to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board meeting

74. The Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP, and the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) presented the report on the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS/PCB 2017/2, DP/FPA 2017/2), which was followed by a statement by the UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director.

75. Delegations welcomed the report and the results achieved. They encouraged UNDP and UNFPA to report systematically on progress and results, and, in doing so, to indicate how they were linked to their respective results frameworks. In particular, they wanted to see better reporting to the UNAIDS Programming Coordinating Board on attributable results delivered with core UNAIDS funding – especially since co-sponsor transparency and accountability had been recurring themes in Programming Coordinating Board meetings. They stressed UNAIDS should facilitate coordination and synergies between different co-sponsors, as part of its core mandate to unite the United Nations development system in the global fight against HIV and AIDS. UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNDP, they emphasized, should coordinate their activities in accordance with their mandates and agreed division of labour, particularly in sexual and reproductive health, comprehensive sexuality education, outreach to adolescents and youth, and human rights programming. The delegations encouraged UNFPA and UNDP to mainstream HIV/AIDS in their new strategic plans in order to support the delivery of the UNAIDS strategy, 2016-2021, and to find solutions to the difficult financial situation of UNAIDS.

76. Another delegation expressed strong support for grounding UNAIDS work in human rights principles, and underscored its strong track record as a United Nations coordinator in the fight against HIV and AIDS. However, adequate resources were essential to its success and to the continued fight against of HIV/AIDS, and a reduction in core resources was therefore worrisome, and could imperil efforts to end the disease. UNAIDS co-sponsors should not depend on the UNAIDS unified budget, results and accountability framework, known as UBRAF, for financial support, but also include HIV/AIDS-related work within their own budgets. In closing, the delegation welcomed the panel co-convened by the UNDP Administrator, as chair of the United Nations Development Group, and the UNAIDS Executive Director, and looked forward to a stronger, more sustainable Programming Coordinating Board business model at its next formal meeting in September 2017.

77. In response, the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) recognized delegations' requests for greater clarity in joint reporting, transparency and accountability, and in

maintaining a human rights based approach. She noted that UNFPA had reported in detail on its UNAIDS joint programme monitoring system and sought to link UBRAF-relevant outputs and indicators in its internal strategic information system. As it reassessed reporting for its forthcoming strategic plan, 2018-2021, the Fund, she assured, would heed delegations' suggestions. She highlighted that UNFPA was mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in its new strategic plan in an integrated way across all outcome areas, especially on adolescents and youth – the target group for the joint UNDP-UNFPA programme called 'All In'. She also noted that UNFPA humanitarian funding included a leveraging component to prevent HIV and sexually transmittable infections. UNFPA, she affirmed, recognized the need to step up resource mobilization while pursuing complementarity among co-sponsors, which UBRAF was meant to catalyse. She stressed that success stories demonstrated that integration projects across countries and regions, such as the triple condom approach, were part of the way forward, and UNFPA was actively seeking to reinvigorate its approach to HIV/AIDS as part of the 2030 Agenda.

78. The Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP, also recognized the need for more systematic reporting on the UNDP results framework, which the series of new, much more integrated, strategic plans leading up to 2030 would reflect. He noted that, with results being positive overall, the organizations had everything to gain from perfecting more systematic reporting. He recognized that the issues at hand were critical and the division of labour was crucial to focusing on key populations, a risky and difficult area of work, which was why Board political and financial support were so important. He stressed that United Nations development system organizations worked well together in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic, thanks in large part to UNAIDS and the clear division of labour among co-sponsors, among whom complementarity was the norm and overlaps were few and far between.

79. The Deputy Executive Director, UNAIDS, underscored the crucial importance of maintaining political and financial support for the joint programme, which, she stressed, could end the epidemic by 2030 through its ongoing fast-track approach and continued solidarity and commitment among partners. She stressed that the epidemic affected the most vulnerable in society and ending HIV/AIDS was crucial to achieving the 2030 Agenda. UNAIDS was committed to working with its partners to devise a sustainable and strengthened operating model, which it would present at the next Programming Coordinating Board meeting in September 2017, and most importantly to delivering results at country level.

80. The Executive Board took note of the report on the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (DP/2017/12–DP/FPA/2017/2).

X. Other matters

UNFPA special event: data systems within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals

81. UNFPA organized the special event as a platform to stimulate discussion on the current challenges and opportunities related to strengthening national data systems for the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. The event featured three separate presentations by panel members and specialists on current initiatives in Afghanistan, Uganda and El Salvador that offered a country-level perspective on the challenges and success stories countries face at the onset of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They included: (a) Afghanistan: transforming official statistics to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: using the 'big data' of satellite imagery for census in Afghanistan; (b) Uganda: strengthening data for development systems for monitoring and implementing the sustainable development agenda; and (c) El Salvador: mapping teenage pregnancy using administrative records. The aim of the event was threefold: (a) create a common understanding of areas with the greatest need for better data collection, processing and analysis, and mobilize

stakeholders through the display of successful projects; (b) highlight innovations of data collection and analysis, especially in crisis settings and when there was no large movements of people; and (c) demonstrate the value of subnational population data to advance the programmatic response of Governments to core needs of women and girls. The event was chaired by the President of the Board and moderated by the UNFPA Executive Director.

Decisions on the UNDP and UNFPA strategic plans

82. The Executive Board adopted decision 2017/6 on elaboration of the UNDP strategic plan, 2018-2021.

83. The Executive Board adopted decision 2017/7 on elaboration of the UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021.

84.